(c) These provisions shall be implemented through the local law enforcing agencies and courts.

Creation of new railway zones and divisions

291. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had taken a decision to create new Railway Zones and Divisions in the country;

(b) if so, when was the decision taken and what were the zones and divisions the Ministry wanted to create;

(c) what is the progress in the direction,what are physical, financial targets achieved, so far; and

(d) by when would these zones and divisions become fully operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal to create six new railway zones with headquarters at Allahabad, Bhubaneswar, Bangalore (now Hubli), Hajipur, Jaipur and Jabalpur was approved by the Cabinet in 1996. Another new zone at Bilaspur was approved by the Cabinet in 1998. The Government's decision to set up eight new divisions with headquarters at Agra, Ahmedabad, Guntur, Pune, Ranchi, Rangiya, Raipur and Singrauli was announced in the Parliament in 1995 while placing the supplementary demands for grants for the 1995-96 budget.

(c) and (d) An Officer-on-Special Duty with skeleton staff has been posted for setting up of each of the new Zones and Divisions. Some work related to acquisition of land, development of office and residential complex has been undertaken. An expenditure of Rs. 49.12 crores has been incurred on new Zones and Rs. 14.64 crores on new Divisions upto 31.3.2001. One/two Divisions have been attached to each Zone to oversee certain specific part activities. However, owing to the severe resource crunch now being faced by the Railways, the proposed new Zones and Divisions will only gradually become operational depending upon the availability of investible resources. It is not possible to indicate any time frame for this at this juncture.